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GEOFFREY McDERMOTT

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Men of Intelligence *by* KENNETH STRONG
Cassell 50*s*

I worked closely with Kenneth Strong in the Anglo-American Intelligence community during the 1950s, and it was clear that he and one other man were our most professional and dedicated Intelligence officers. This book reflects Strong's character and modus operandi: much common sense, a constant preoccupation with the proper functioning of the Intelligence machine, insistence on as objective and cool assessment of the available information as is humanly possible. He had the singular distinction, for a limey, both of being Eisenhower's wartime Chief of Intelligence and of being invited to join the newly formed Central Intelligence Agency as a senior member a few years later, which he declined. The photograph opposite page 115 is a striking testimony: there is the single British lamb amongst all the lions of the US Intelligence Board. It is not surprising, though it will alarm some people, that he advocates a CIA type organisation for Britain. He, and eerily enough Kim Philby, did much to help CIA set itself up.

Strong defines with clarity what Intelligence is and is not. It comprises 'the collection of information, its collation and evaluation, and the communication of the end-product to the appropriate user at the right time'. It cannot be expected to foretell the timing of actions by the other side when they have not made up their own minds. He allocates one short chapter to spies, and comments baldly: 'I have always had doubts about the usefulness of secret services and secret agents.' So much for J. Bond. He estimates that perhaps 5 per cent of an Intelligence agency's information comes from agents' reports, some 30 per cent from those of service attachés and diplomats, and most of the rest from published material. Quantitatively of course he is right. But personally I think he underestimates the importance of people like Philby and Blake, whom he waves aside in a few words and who are denied admittance to the index. The Soviet Government does not award one of its highest decorations to such people for no reason. Nor does the Lord Chief Justice of England make a habit of judging that one man has 'rendered most of Britain's efforts completely useless', as he did of Blake.

Strong's first four chapters deal with various Intelligence chiefs in Germany, France and Britain from 1914 to 1945, and their varying influence on operations and policy. A recurrent theme is the Intelligence officer's dilemma: he should by rights take a hand in policy so that he may know for what purposes he is supplying Intelligence; yet he must scrupulously avoid providing only such Intelligence as will please the policy makers, or indeed fit in with ideas of his own. Under Hitler, for instance, the plans for Overlord which Cicero had purloined in our embassy in Ankara went for nothing because they did not fit in with some preconceived Intelligence views in Berlin. Strong plays down the CIA's policy-making role; but in practice it is very powerful and its head has a permanent seat in the president's inner cabinet. To the list of its operations which he quotes, such as the overthrow of hostile governments in Iran and Guatemala, I have little doubt that we can now add Cambodia.

For myself the heart of the matter is in the last three chapters. Strong rightly emphasises the point that the Intelligence set-up in Britain could only profit from less secrecy over the wide area of its activities where secrecy is convenient but not essential. Those quaint old instruments the Official Secrets Acts ensure amongst other things that, while the names of the senior members of the SIS are known to our allies and potential enemies, the great British public is kept in ignorance. The US have never seen the need for similar gagging. He is not altogether exempt himself: neither the Secret Intelligence Service (MI6) nor the Security Services (MI5) are so much as mentioned; nor are the names of any of their chiefs, past or present. On the other hand there is much about the great men of the CIA, such as Allen Dulles and John McCone. While Strong's admiration of the CIA is well justified, I believe he underrates the KGB. On the invasion of Czechoslovakia, for instance, I do not agree that they miscalculated world reactions; the important point surely was that the US government had intimated that they would let it pass, and so would their allies.

Strong ends with all kinds of constructive and stimulating suggestions. The chief of the centralised British Intelligence agency which he proposes would have to cover politics, economics, military affairs, science, technology etc as a connected whole; he would have personal access to the prime minister, and say his say in policy making. In Britain's situation commercial Intelligence is of importance, and the staffs of embassies should be strengthened in this area. Apart from this he has little to say about the connection betwen diplomacy and Intelligence. He considers that computers will play an increasing part in storing and sifting information; the CIA already use them extensively. He refers only glancingly to the developing

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